towards the fence into the pits. My informant asserts that the result was sometimes marvellous ; the pits were soon full and the animals coming behind ran over their comrades and escaped ; the men followed closely and stabbed the antelopes in the neck. But this of course meant the wholesale destruction of game. Happily a stop has been put to this kind of hunting. 224 476

Nowadays Natives use *iron traps* which they buy in the European stores, some of which are quite sufficiently strong to catch a duiker or a wild pig. They smear them with another charm, the *butiba*, a kind of brownish moss growing on the roots of a tree called shivumbunkanye. It also is said to have the power of "making the game forget." 224 824

I have described some other traps when dealing with boys' games.

Everybody was allowed to hunt in the good old times when the White authorities had not yet introduced so many restrictive regulations. Ordinary hunters are called bahloti or bazingeli (Zulu term). But there were others who had made a kind of trade of hunting, regular, professional hunters, who were called *phisa* (pl. maphisa). They were not satisfied to kill an occasional antelope near their village, but they undertook big expeditions to the great deserts of the Hlengwe country where game was plentiful and where the most precious of all, i. e., elephants, abounded. It cannot be said that the maphisa formed a definite class in the tribe like the bone-throwers, for instance. I never heard of a true initiation taking place prior to their becoming maphisa. Yet they were known and recognized as a kind of superior caste and were very proud of their name of maphisa. They claimed a special power over big game owing to the mysterious rites which they practised; thus they partook more or less of the nature of magicians. I have come across some of them and heard marvellous stories about others. Old Madyashikulu of the Nhlongo clan, whom I met in the Ntimane country, near Antioka, boasted that he could pick out an elephant in a herd and force it to come and fall down at the foot of the tree up which he had climbed. He had then only to stab it from his retreat, and kill it ; after which he came down from the tree to 224 554 791

224 554 791 dance over the carcase of his victim! Another was Mubandane, a relation of Mboza, who lived in Nondwana. As is customary with many Natives of the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, he hunted elephants for a Portuguese trader, named Fonseca, who provided him with guns and powder. When ready to undertake his hunting trip to the north of Gazaland (Mosapa), he had to undergo a purification (hlambo). His medicine-man cooked a pot full of his drugs, washed him with the froth and poured the contents of the pot on the roof, over the entrance of the hunter's hut. Mubandane had then to stoop and enter his hut, the water leaking through the grass and falling on his shoulders. These words were pronounced by the medicine-man, during this ritual entry into the hut: "Go and be happy! Though the rain fall on you, though the dew make you wet, when you sleep, you will be everywhere as in a hut; everywhere it will be like home (kaya). You will have taken your hut with you, you will enter it in a wet state!"

224 784 Other maphisa were the hippopotamus hunters settled on the banks of the Nkomati river, whose customs I shall describe later on.

In connection with their *hunting trips*, these professional hunters are subject to many taboos. As we have just seen, they must undergo a purification before starting, and also be inoculated in the wrists with special drugs, the most important being those of the tintebe (I. p. 479) the same which are used by the slayers of enemies in battle. Another favourite medicine for hunters is made from the piece of meat which is found between the heart and the lungs of big animals. In some cases they have to prepare themselves for their expedition by daily ablutions and by absolute continence for a certain number of days. The sacrifice of a fowl is also sometimes made before starting. It is taboo for adults to eat the meat of this fowl; it might endanger the success of the expedition. Little children may eat it: "they are quiet" (i. e. they have no sexual relations), and so the hunting will not be spoilt. When all these preparations are finished, the hunters start with their rattles, singing special songs, the songs of the hunters (Part V).

The trip itself may last for months, and constitutes a kind of

-825 791 The reader must certainly have noticed the curious connection established by Mboza between hippopotami and wizards. As we shall see when studying the witchcraft theory, wizards are supposed to have the power of *sending* wild animals to kill their victims. Here the idea is somewhat different. In the three stories which I have collected and of which I give a literal translation, the wizards have become the masters of the hippopotami and ride upon them during the night : they are the maleficent agents who induce these animals to play havoc in the gardens of the people. Two of the stories are supposed to have taken place in the Khosen country, the other lower down on the river, at a spot called Shihahlu. Let us begin with this one.

825 791 539 *First story.* "The wizards put a bit into the mouth of the hippopotamus and climb upon it. You cannot get the animal unless you first get its master. The 'phisa' knows the wizard because he possesses drugs more powerful than those of the wizard. At Shihahlu there was a hippopotamus which ventured to come out of the river even in daylight; it came on to the road and frightened the women passing there who had gone to buy food on account of the famine. They threw away their baskets in fear. The beast used also to go and plunder the fields. The chiefs called a very clever hunter and showed him where the hippopotamus used to come out of the river. This man, who was from Sihhahlu, swallowed his medicine and put on a great many amulets (timfisa) made of varan skin; he also took his tail, the tail of a young hippopotamus, went during the night to that spot and saw the beast ; there was fire on its back ; this fire belongs to the wizard. (Where do these lights come from? I do not know. Perhaps it is the work of the Devil!) The hunter returned home. Another day he went again and heard a noise in the water ; the hippopotamus came out of the river and the hunter saw rings round its ears and bracelets round its legs. He shot it and it died. Then he went to tell the chiefs. They came, and sure enough they found four bracelets on each leg and six rings on each ear. I saw them myself. It had put on all its ornaments ; but it was very thin because it was made to work hard for its master. We went to eat the meat of the hippopotamus which was thus adorned (longile)... During the night cries of mourning were heard on the Lombye rivulet. It was the masters of the hippopotamus who were mourning over it, and the next morning we found pieces of the blue cotton print which

is used by mourners hanging on the reeds where the hippopotamus had been cut open. These people had put them there to mourn their hippopotamus. As regards the hunter, he was given a reward of £ 6." 825 539, 791

Second story. "A phisa called Shitjobeke from Matlotlo was called and shown where the hippopotamus used to emerge from the river. He went there during the night and saw its master on its back. He told him: 'So it is your hippopotamus which ravages the gardens. Hold it firm! I am going to kill it.' The wizard answered: 'I beseech you, Khosa, do not kill it; I will not come any more to spoil the mealies!' The hunter let him go and went away. Next evening the animal came out again, its master on its back. The hunter possessed a drug by which he could kindle the lights on the back of the hippopotamus. He saw the wizard and said: 'My friend, now hold it fast. I am firing! If you do not hold it I will kill you.' He fired and the master went away. The hunter remained on the spot fearing that the wizard might come back and ressuscitate it. Next day he told the chiefs to come and cut it open. He performed the lurulula; he blew his ndjao over the legs, the belly, the chest, and the ears; then they turned the beast over on the other side, and he did the same thing. They cut off the tail and gave it to him: the hunter uses this as a medicine; he will mix it with other drugs and this will help him against the wizards; they will no longer be able to come to him during the night and make him dream of hippopotami; it will also give him the power of killing other hippopotami. Then they cooked the meat of the chest, which is a tit-bit. The divinatory bones showed who was to roast it and eat the first mouthful and then distribute their portions to the others. The bones often say also: 'If it is the meat of a male hippopotamus do not eat it in the village, eat it at such and such a place...'" [789]

Third story. "There was another hunter, Mundjindji, of the Nyoka clan. His father had been killed by Heaven (lightning), because he possessed charms which he had got from the Ba-Sutho. This man used to dig up the corpses of the dead; he dissected the skin of their foreheads and killed, (with the drugs thus obtained,) the boys who came back from the mines (magaisa). The Commandant (Portuguese Administrator) arrested him, and he was imprisoned in Lourenço Marques. He said: 'They are telling lies about me,' and he was released. However he killed some more people and was imprisoned for one month. Even now he is still doing it. He is a 'phisa.' They called him in to get rid of a hippopotamus which was annoying them. It was the Commandant who called him. He went to hunt it. For many

539 days he did not see it, but one day, at sunset, he took his canoe and went on to the river. He took a red piece of cotton ; this was reflected
791 at the bottom of the river. The hippopotamus saw it there and came up
825 to see what was the matter. The hunter fired at it ; he fired a second time. And lo! there on its back was the one who rides upon it! One of the balls pierced him whilst the other pierced the hippopotamus. The animal rushed towards the hunter, but he fired a third time and killed it. Next morning they found the hippopotamus floating on the water, dead. In the village also a man had died during the night, and they were mourning there. The hunter had said to the people : 'I have killed a man who was on the hippopotamus.' And on one side of the river people were eating meat whilst on the other side people were crying. But they did not lodge a complaint against him ; no action can be taken in such a case."

224 As regards *the elephant (ndlopfu)* it was the favourite object of
797 the chase, because killing one of these large beasts meant not only abundance of meat but also wealth on account of the ivory. Madyashikulu used to bring the tusks to Manukosi (Gungunyana's grandfather) who returned some of them to him, and with the money thus obtained the hunter could buy a wife. There are different systems of lurulula in the case of the elephant. The hunter takes a little of the tintebe powder (the charm of the slayers) pierces the eye of the beast, mixes the vitreum with the powder, adds drugs prepared from the end of the trunk and the tail and uses this mixture to overcome the muru. A phisa of the Maputju country employed another method. He cut a piece of meat from the foreleg, cooked it, anointed it with powder from the calabash of the slayers, chewed it and began to blow it over the animal after having "climbed it." He then crept over the elephant in the same way as described above in the case of the hippopotamus, holding his gun in his hand the whole time. His comrades used to anoint him with a white medicine round both eyes. When he had returned home the treatment was continued by the administration of two vapour baths (mahungulo). He had to expose his body to the steam produced first by a decoction of various twigs, secondly by another decoction prepared from medicinal roots mixed with pieces of meat taken from a goat and from the elephant

rainbow ; he dwells in heaven and the rainbow is his bow. He it is who taught men the use of the bow. 773 821

The two great phenomena which mostly impress South Africans are lightning and rain, and of these you hear wonderful and endless stories!

4) Lightning.

This is called *lihati* (li-tin), and is said to be caused by a bird called *ndlati* (yi-tin). These two words, etymologically speaking, seem to be related to each other. They possess the feminine suffix *ti* which is met with in the forms *eti, ati, oti*. This bird is also called *nkuku wa tilo* amongst the Ba-Ronga, the cock of heaven, or *psele dja tilo*, the hen of heaven, and magicians know how to determine its sex when the bird has fallen. 821 125

The thunder is attributed either to the bird itself or, more frequently, to Heaven. The proper expression for "It thunders" is : "Tilo dji djuma" — "Heaven roars."

In the Northern clans those who practise magical arts add many other particulars to the story, some of which may have been borrowed from the Pedi magicians, who seem to possess a more complete explanation of the phenomenon. According to them, the *ndlati* (Pedi, *dali*) is a bird of four colours, green, red, black and white, which lives in the mountains, by preference at the confluence of rivers. The medicine-men of former times knew its hiding place and had even found the eggs of the bird in a nest floating on the water. When a thunderstorm breaks, the bird flies to heaven into the clouds ; there may be scores of them, but one only will be dangerous (lebya) and cause death. It rushes down to the ground, striking a tree on its way, tearing its bark and its wood, and throwing it down ; or it falls on a hut and burns it, or on a man and kills him. Having reached the soil, the bird can be caught, and I heard people seriously assert that four of these birds, unable to fly away, had been found the previous year in Sikororo country. Or the bird enters the ground, to a depth of two to three feet, and either remains there in its own form, or (this is the most common saying) deposits its urine (murundju), 821 825 775

821 which had caused the flash of lightning, and flies away back to
825 the mountains. The magician who understands the "treatment
791 of Heaven" comes and digs at the spot ; there he finds a kind of gelatinous substance which solidifies after a little time. I possess a little of this curious drug given to me by a Pedi magician, by name Mudjumi ; it resembles a piece of chalk, and is considered very valuable on account of its rareness, and because it is used in the manufacture of the wonderful medicine of Heaven. Should a village have been struck by lightning, the magician of Heaven will come and dig out this foreign body ; if he finds it, the taboo is removed. If he does not, the whole village must move to another place. In the same way, it is taboo to warm oneself at a fire made of the wood of a tree that has been struck by lightning, or to use it as fuel.

The flute of Heaven.
Drawn by J. Ware.

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Happily this dreadful bird can be prevented from killing and burning by magical means. Both the Pedi Mudjumi and the Thonga Makasane possessed the enchanted flute, by which they could force Heaven — or the bird of Heaven — to spare them. Mudjumi having sold me his flute, I can describe it at length. It is made of a hollow bone five inches long, covered with Varan skin, filled at its larger extremity with a black substance like wax. Inside, to keep it clean, there is a vulture's feather. The bone is said to have been taken from the ndlati bird ; the wax substance was made from powder obtained by drying up and pulverising a little of the heart, the eye, the bones, the feathers, and the flesh of the bird. In the wax are embedded three seeds of Abrus precatorius, the "lucky bean" well-known in South Africa, a round seed of a splendid coral colour with a black spot, very much used in Thonga magic. This addition of Abrus precatorius intensifies the sound of the flute and enables it to reach heaven.

reach heaven. The magician, seeing the thunderstorm approaching, climbs up the hill without any fear, blows in his flute: psee... psee... psee..., and shouts: "You! Heaven! Go further! I have nothing against you! I do not fight against you!" He may add in a threatening tone: "If you are sent by my enemies against me, I will cut you open with this knife of mine." The thunderstorm will then pass away!

This invocation to Heaven is curious, and we shall better understand it when studying the part played by Heaven in Thonga religion. Here I am merely considering the superstition as an attempt at explaining a natural phenomenon. And we may well ask: how is it possible for such absurdities to be believed, and firmly believed, by men who are not at all devoid of a sense of observation? The idea that lightning is a bird comes perhaps from the fact that its movements in falling from above resemble the evolutions of a bird in the air. After all the phenomenon is so sudden that this explanation could easily be accepted by the imagination of the savage. As regards the statements about the coagulated urine of the bird, I must admit that I was unable to understand on what they could be based, until I saw some samples of fulgurites found where lightning had struck the ground; the heat of the electric current vitrifies the sand, forming a kind of pipe, which enters the soil, where it ramifies to a certain depth. These fulgurites, though not perfectly answering to the description given by Native magicians, may have been the natural substratum upon which Bantu imagination built up all the other superstitions.

5) The problem of rain and the way Thongas deal with it.

All over the earth the question of rainfall is of primary importance, but this is especially the case in Subtropical Africa, even more than anywhere else. Rain may not fall during seven months, from April to October, and nobody worries about it. But if it fails in November and December, at the beginning of the rainy season, it is a dreadful misfortune, a calamity more serious

823 regarding its confines and the shore on the other side. Some
791 magicians claim to have gone and stayed for some time down in the depths : to have "crossed the sea" is for them a kind of diploma, which gives them the right of exercising their art. (See Chapter III.)

823 The *tide* (byaela) is considered to be caused by a whale (nkomu) which alternately swallows and vomits the sea-water : this is the common idea. Some Natives, however, connect it with the moon, having noticed that the tide is higher at full moon and at the wane.

The sea must be feared : it is jealous. "When some one is taken away by the great wave, do not shout! Do not exclaim : 'He is lost!', else you will never see him again. On the contrary, if you say : 'All right, let him go', then the returning wave will bring him back." These are the assertions of Spoon. And old Makhani expressed his approval by nodding his head!

372 "It is the same with *fire*," Spoon also remarked. There was
784 a terrible bush fire in Rikatla on the 18th of September 1908. As always happens at the end of winter, the bush was absolutely dry. A leper woman, tilling her fields, wished to cook a little manioc. The fire leapt to the weeds which she had gathered and from these to the bush. Two huts were burnt. "It is their own fault," said Spoon, "when the bush fire comes you must put it out quietly. If you make any noise, if you shout, it comes straight at you. That is what happened. In the first village people fought calmly and succeeded in saving their huts. At Jeck's village, they cried out. The fire leapt on to a hut, the small hut of the son. The mother cried : 'Yo! yo! Where shall I put my child?' She went on crying out until the hut was burnt to the ground. So the fire leapt on to the big hut and burnt it. She has only herself to blame!" (1)

823 The origin of *stones* is absolutely unknown. Pikinini, a Nkuna boy, who was endowed with an extraordinary imagination, once drew my attention to the stratification of a large dolomite boulder on which different concentric layers were visible, and said to me :

[521] (1) Silence is always recommended to prevent misfortune : in the case of war (I, p. 470) women at home must keep silent ; likewise when the husband is hunting hippopotami (p. 69), when a child is seized with convulsions owing to the power of *tilo* (heaven). See also my remarks on the kunga rite. (I, p. 124).

themselves so far removed from the animal world as is the case amongst more civilised races. 826

Another point on which Thongas see a resemblance between man and the animal is this : they believe that both possess the *nuru* (I. p. 478 ; II, p. 77-80). It is true that the nuru is only found in some animals : the eland, the ndakazi antelope, the elephant, the hippopotamus, etc. We shall have to consider this superstition again when dealing with Thonga Animism. 774

Is this idea of identity between man and the animal pushed so far as a belief that men can transform themselves into animals, and vice-versa? It is certain that in tales men are often changed into hyenas, lions, etc. (See Dukuli, *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 283 and the story of the Ogre Ziniko (p. 256).) But these are purely fictitious. The theory is by no means generally accepted. In the ordinary course of life such transformations would not be considered possible. But they are certainly thoroughly believed in in the domain of magic. Magicians claim that they can fly through the air, with their axes, transform themselves into the lightning bird and so kill their enemy. But it is the wizards (baloyi) who are considered to possess this power par excellence, especially the faculty of changing human beings into beasts to make them work on their behalf. These ideas will be studied in Chapter III. 826 791

I have already mentioned the bird which "stops travellers" (I. p. 339) ; amongst Mammalia a certain Antelope is the object of the same superstitious fear. This is the little red *magulwe* (or *shipene*) whose astragalus bone is employed in divination under the name of malumbi (See Part VI. Letter D). — "When it crosses the road, in front of a travelling party," says Mankhelu, "the leader of the company stops his comrades, goes forward, sits down alone at the spot where the antelope passed, and pours his magical powder into the footprints of the animal. Then he shouts to his companions to come and follow him. Having walked for some time, he takes off all his clothing, and lies down quite naked, as if he were dead. The others continue their march forward. After a while, he jumps to his feet and, making a circuit through the bush, outruns them, without being noticed, and sits down on the road, further on. 825 777

834 place at a given spot and according to a given order of precedence.
783 This will bring about the definite restoration of the village and a new and pure life will henceforth be possible.

761 I ought perhaps to offer some excuse for having dwelt at some
827 length on a subject which is generally left alone as indelicate. I hope however that my readers will agree with me that all these physiological conceptions and all these strange customs, far from being of a lascivious or licentious character, denote, on the contrary, a deep and earnest conception of life and an aspiration towards purity which it is most interesting to observe. They are at the same time amongst the most striking manifestations of Bantu Dynamism.

827 Beside these great principles of Thonga physiology, I may
576 mention a few other ideas relating to the various secretions of the human body.
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Spitting (ku thuka) is a sign of want of respect, as we have seen (p. 310). It is especially prohibited in the presence of people who are eating, and if any one should spit, they will insult the culprit, saying to him : "Eat your own shikohlolo!" — When some one expectorates, others present will cover the phlegm with sand, not on account of taboo, but from disgust.

826 *Blood* (ngati, yin-tin) is also instinctively covered with sand, as
791 soon as it has been shed. This is a taboo, because wizards might use it to bewitch you! The charms of the wizards are commonly called *tingati*, bloods.

827 As regards *sweat* (nyuku, mu-mi), although I cannot assert that the idea is universal, I think it is conceived as coming from outside and falling on men like the dew (mbere) on the grass. When they enter a place which is close, Natives say : "There is sweat here." The etymology of this word is *ku nyuka*, to melt.

Excrement (matjimba) is looked upon as disgusting, but there is no taboo in connection with it.

Yawning (yahlamula) is attended with no superstition.

Hiccough (shitikwane) is not feared in children, but very much so in the case of sick people.

Belching (bisa) is sometimes considered as the result of having been bewitched, especially if the patient becomes thin. Magicians

lightning), or animistic (Son-of-the-Moth). But they are not of much importance. They belong to the same category as the description given by the Psalmist of the sun as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, or to that of Homer comparing the break of the day to a young damsel with rosy fingers. This is poetry, mere personification of natural objects, or forces, and not beliefs. The poetical tendency is very marked amongst primitive races. It may be that ideas of this kind were more firmly held in former times, if the tribe has really passed through a more mythological phase, a hypothesis for which there are some grounds. 771 774

2) Collective beliefs.

The beliefs of the Thongas which deserve to be called by that name because they are universal and express themselves in important rites and customs, are the following : 771 769

1. The human soul continues its existence after death, when it is endowed with new powers which make it an object of awe and fear. *The spirits of the ancestors* are the main objects of religious worship. They form the principal category of spirits (psikwembu). 775

2. Although the spirits of the departed generally have nothing to do with people other than their descendants, some of them, especially *those belonging to foreign tribes*, can take possession of living men and cause troubles which must be cured by a process of exorcism. This is the second category of spirits. [789]

3. Some individuals have the power of magically unsheathing themselves during the night, and their spirit goes out to torment, or to kill and eat other people. These are *the wizards* (baloyi) ; this third category of spirits accomplish their wicked deeds when separated from the body, but their body is still living and they re-enter it. These three beliefs are distinctly animistic. 774 754 791

4. There is in man, and in a few large animals, a semi-spiritual principle, the *nuru*, which escapes from the body when the individual is killed in war, or in hunting, and through which the dead man, or animal, avenges himself or itself on the murderer. What is the relation between the nuru and the shadow (sitjhuti)? This is not stated. The nuru seems to be of a more material nature, as it can enter a root, and it remains attached to the corpse and the bones of the person or animal killed. This category of spiritual enemies, probably invented under the influence of fear and remorse, has no connection with ordinary people, 771 774 828

is carefully maintained, and regularly smeared. He puts his offerings there, principally tobacco. The snuff box is deposited there. Does he want snuff? He enters the hut clapping his hands, saluting his spirits, and, taking the box, throws a pinch of it at the foot of the branch, and says: "You! Ngoni, you see that I have not stolen! I first gave you your share." His wife will do the same. This is a "mhamba." — When ready to undertake a journey, he will come to the altar, sit on his ankles (a woman will kneel down) and take leave of the spirits. Holding his assagay, and his manono root, he says: "Good-bye, Ba-Ngoni! This hut is yours; keep it well! I go to such and such a place," and asks them to bless his journeying. On his return he will inform the spirits that he has succeeded in his trip. If he is sick, and the bones have revealed that the disease has been caused by the spirits, he again comes to the altar, and says: "You! Ba-Ngoni, why are you angry with me?" These acts of worship are not only performed at the altar. Wherever he may be, before drinking beer, the exorcised will pour out a little for his spirits. He will also throw a little food for them before eating. This will be *a daily worship*, much more constant and individual than the rites of ancestrolatry, a real communion with the spirits who, after having tormented the exorcist, have become his benefactors, giving him the power of healing others and thus of making money! There is much more religiosity in the exorcised than in ordinary people.

3) Development of subliminal faculties.

All these nervous crises, natural or provoked, the double psychological existence which is fostered by them, the regular participation in the exorcism of others, generally greatly injure the mind of the exorcised; they have an extraordinary look, something wild about them, as if they were not in their right senses. They may be heard sometimes groaning, or emitting a sudden cry without any reason. This nervous instability may pass away and they may return to their normal state, but it may be that if they possess those strange mental powers, which modern psychology

756 158 791 calls subliminal, and which are more or less dormant in every individual, these faculties will suddenly develop and the exorcised will become a real magician. A faculty of *second sight* may reveal itself. Or he will become a *diviner*, either by ecstasy or by bone throwing (See Letter D). Or he will be a *wonder-worker*, a *prophet*, etc. Mholombo, who was an extraordinarily acute woman, had possessed all these gifts. She could discover wizards ; one night, crossing the Mabota country, she met one of the indunas of the chief accompanied by two other men, leading his own wife to the marsh, in order to eat her. They were acting in their capacity of wizards (See Letter C). Mholombo knew them at once and said to them : "No use eating her. Her meat is bitter sour." Terrified, the wizards fled, and confessed their guilt next morning! I have related in the *Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie*, of 1910, how she received divinatory bones from her possessing spirit, prophesied the arrival of missionaries, showed up the man who had stolen £ 8 to the Mpfumo chief, was given the power to cross the Nkomati river by walking on the water, etc. By this same power Shidzabalane was able to leave his body, and to go and dwell in his own shadow (p. 362). Reference will again be made to the profession of magician when dealing with witchcraft.

4) The society of the exorcised.

756 If the power of an exorcised person becomes very great, if he succeeds in his cures, all his *mathwaza* join him, and he becomes the founder of a school. He starts new rites, discovers more powerful drugs, and so attracts patients to himself from all parts. We have seen that five or six schools existed northward of Lourenço Marques, in the Mabota and Nondwane countries. Mboza might have started a new one, as he had already cured two patients.

Each school of exorcists celebrates *an annual feast*, in winter, at the close of the harvest season, a feast to which all the disciples of the master are summoned. This is the rite of the *renewal of the drugs*, which we have already noticed as a medical practice in the

754 that baloyi are more or less subject to the ancestral gods. It may happen also that if somebody shows kindness to a noyi, this noyi will take him under his protection, and prevent his comrades from doing harm to his friend. But these are rare occurrences, and the baloyi are, and remain, criminals in the view of the Thongas.

Stealing, killing, enslaving are the principal crimes of these maleficent beings. But they can also cause any other species of harm to their infortunate victims. I have told the story of a young man who complained to me of having been deprived by the tricks of a noyi aunt of the power of having sexual intercourse with his wife; she was pregnant and the witch wished to act on the offspring in such a way as to change it into a snake, a hare, a quail, or a duiker, so that the mother should die on the day of the birth. (I. p. 187.)

II. *White Magic and Magicians.*

1) Distinction between Magicians and Wizards.

754 As previously stated, the power which the magicians claim to
791 possess is perhaps not essentially different from that of the baloyi.
756 They even sometimes boast that they are themselves baloyi, baloyi more powerful than the ordinary witches, and that they are thus able to discover them and baffle all their tricks. So Mathuza, one of the most celebrated Ronga witch-doctors, used to say: "I am the great Noyi! I am the one who kills. I can fly. So I know them all and I disclose them." But magicians differ absolutely from wizards in four ways, at least:

1) Their activity is not secret, nocturnal and more or less unconscious. They act openly, in the light, during the day, and do not hide their magical powers; on the contrary, they make a show of them, covering themselves with any number of charms; most of them wear "tingoya" and smear themselves with ochre (p. 100).

2) They all undergo a preparation, or pass through an initiation, differing according to the different kinds of magic they practise.

So they possess, so to speak, letters patent, either because they have been received into the society of their fellow-magicians (as is the case with medicine-men, exorcists, and throwers of bones), or because they have found new and powerful drugs during a sojourn, real or pretended, in the sea, the desert, or elsewhere. 754 791 756

3) Whilst baloyi are said to use *tingati* (blood) poisons, the magicians employ *miri*, i. e., medicinal herbs or objects, drugs which, however, are all thought to possess special powers. I do not say "supernatural" powers, as the notion conveyed by this word cannot exist in any definite form amongst people who have hardly a true conception of Nature. The stronger the miri, the stronger the magician. — In addition to their drugs, they certainly believe themselves endowed with personal power due to the development of their faculties of second sight, etc., which they also attribute to the spirits (ancestor-gods) from whom they have inherited their drugs.

4) The last point of difference but by no means the least important, is this: magicians are the supporters and upholders of the social order, and not criminals attempting to destroy it. They foretell the future, cure diseases, prevent misfortune of all kinds, fight against baloyi, and are regularly consulted by the Native Court for the detection of wizards.

Between the unconscious baloyi whose crimes are purely imaginary and the bangoma who use their magical powers for the benefit of those who have recourse to them, there certainly exists another category, i. e. wicked individuals who kill their fellow-men by means of real poisons or by criminal practices and do this quite consciously, either to avenge themselves on their enemies or to help others to get rid of those whom they hate. Such acts may be called *ku loya*, by an extended use of the term; but there is another word to designate these crimes, the word *ku dambika*, which we already met with when speaking of the jilted lover who wishes to play an evil trick on the girl who despised him (I. p. 101). In the neighbourhood of Rikatla, there was a man who claimed to be a noyi of this type, and to have at the same time the power of "treating" (daha) buloyi. He was a Mu-Sutho, a stranger. Wishing to kill an enemy, a Ronga of the country asked his help; 754 791

754 the magician bade him first bring a sheep ; this he slew, took part
791 of its fat, and smeared with it and with some very black drugs a root of the ntjhopfa tree (I. p. 58). This fat and these drugs were to give to the root the power of "taking away" the heart of the enemy ; the magician buried it in the road and assured his client that when the root was rotten his enemy would be dead. This root was discovered later on, owing to a revelation given by the bones, and the man who had consulted the magician had to pay a fine of £ 1. No doubt such conscious acts of witchcraft exist, but this is not the typical loya.

2) Various categories of magicians.

756 Some magicians specialise in one division of the immense domain
791 of magic, but others claim to practise the magic arts in all their diversity.

1) Those whose activity bears a less magical character. These are the *ñanga* (yin-tin), or *ba-muri*, whom we met with when dealing with the medical art (Compare Chapter I. the Medicine-men).

2) Those who have passed through the ceremony of exorcism and have become exorcists. They are called *gobela*, and the character of their initiation has been sufficiently explained in Chapter II.

3) Those called *mungoma*, magicians proper, who have divinatory powers and can perform wonders, fight the baloyi, cause rain to fall, influence Heaven, etc., even if there has been no exorcism episode in their previous career.

4) Those whose principal qualification is the power to detect baloyi, and who are called for that reason *shinusa*, "smellers-out."

5) The bone-throwers *(ba-bula)*, whom we shall describe in Chapter IV.

The priests, *ba ku hahla*, do not enter into any of these categories, their specific activity being of a totally different character ; they have recourse to Religion and not to Magic.

3) Some Thonga Magicians.

On calling to mind the various magicians with whom I came in contact, I observe that very few limited themselves to the medical art alone ; *Sam Ngwetsa* and *Kokolo* alone did this. The aim of the magician is to combine as many branches of the business as possible. — *Mankhelu*, with his forked branch, was a medicine-man of the highest rank, owing to his calabashes containing a mixture of all the most powerful drugs, salted with Rivimbi's sea charms. He was a magician, being a rain-maker, a detector of baloyi, and, in particular, a successful bone-thrower, but he seemed to be entirely ignorant of the art of exorcism. — *Makasana*, on the contrary, a Thonga from the Leydenburg district, had acquired his power after passing through the ordeal of exorcism and had obtained the drugs of his exorcist. This had made him into a regular *mungoma*. Round his neck he wore three necklaces of half transparent yellow beads, between which were small square lizard-skin bags, timfisa, containing : 1) drugs against snake bites ; 2) charms against the baloyi ; 3) the *maringo ya tilo*, the charms of Heaven. Birds' claws and a crocodile's tooth also hung round his neck ; his hair was pulled out, the *tingoya* radiating in all directions, and in the very middle, on the top of his head, he wore a little chain, in the form of a narrow turban, to which a brass cartridge was fixed ; this was his snuff box, resting comfortably on his thick thatch! Possessing all these drugs Makasana was at the same time exorcist, witch-doctor, medicine-man, and magician of Heaven. The last qualification was perhaps his principal one ; he told me that he had to fight against his colleagues, who wished to test him by means of their own charms. — "At noon," he said, "when the sky is quite clear, I see a little cloud appearing over my head, quite black. The lightning bird is in it, and wants to kill me, having been sent by one of my enemies. Then I pour a little of the medicine of Heaven into the palm of my hand ; when I see the bird moving its wings and ready to rush down upon me, I blow a little of my drug towards the cloud and the bird will come and fall down powerless quite close to me. Then I take it, and cut

it in half. I take a little of the heart, and of the eyes, I crush the bones, I make a powder with all these ingredients, and this is my great medicine. With one of the bones I make a flute ; I put a little powder into it, and, when a thunderstorm breaks, I go outside without danger and conjure the lightning by playing on my flute, etc." (p. 314).

Mathuza, the magician of Nondwane to whom I have just alluded, was essentially a detector of baloyi. — So was also *Ñwashihandjime*, the great Nkuna magician, a splendid creature, tall, his eyes beaming with a kind of supernatural light. I once saw him, after having performed the "smelling out" rite, point out a woman with the tail he always carried with him, an enormous tail fixed on a handle richly decorated with beads and copper wire. This tail, which is one of the most common attributes of the mungoma, is generally *a gnu tail*. It is said that when a mother gnu has dropped her offspring, she beats it (phyita) with her tail and thus gives the new-born gnu the necessary strength to walk and follow its mother. Hence the peculiar magic use of the gnu tail. In its very middle are hidden certain drugs which possess a revelatory virtue ; the magician puts his nose right amongst the hair before pronouncing his sentence and beating (phyita) the noyi. Ñwashihandjime is said to have disappeared from his village for months, and to have come back from the desert emaciated but full of new magical powers. I once tried to draw his attention to things more spiritual than his art and his drugs. He gazed at me with wild eyes, as if unable to follow my demonstration ; suddenly he emitted a cry very similar to a hiccough and turned his back. (Hiccoughing is a well-known symptom, showing either that one has been bewitched by "mitisa," or that one possesses magical power).

At the station of Shiluvane I once made an inventory of the charms of another Nkuna magician. In his hair the man wore a brass bracelet and some rings, and a necklace with a sixpence attached, all these objects having been inherited from his father, who was himself a mungoma ; moreover he hung round his neck a little piece of the skin of a goat, which had been sacrificed after the death of his father ; in this way he tried to acquire and keep

the power of his initiator and of his god. Two panther's claws were fixed on his head, pointing towards each other, as if they wished to catch something ; this helped him to go and seize (to ba) the wizard in the *vumisa* rite, which I shall now describe. Two empty goats' bladders swung amidst his crop of tingoya as he walked, an unmistakable sign that he had cured patients and received goats as a reward. The noise they made in hitting against each other "called other goats to come to him." From his neck hung two crocodile's teeth, a piece of buffalo's horn, "psiboho psa nga" — "that which ties me, viz., makes me firm ;" another horn which had been broken by a bullet and in which he kept the *nulu* medicine (p. 496), the root of a white sea-weed, used to produce the foam of the *gobo* rite in the exorcism, and a goat's horn full of a powder which cures the "burwa" disease. The burwa is the strong Westerly wind in Shiluvane (I. p. 18) which the baloyi are said to use for bewitching through the ears. He rubbed the patient with the horn and placed it near one ear, then near the other, and could cure the bewitched in that way. Another drug, called "rishwala," helped him to acquire many wives, and to have many children ; a cock's spur was also worn in order to give him "courage and weight." This mungoma, who called at Shiluvane on the 28th of June 1899, sold me a "kaross" (a rug) made of skins of rock rabbits, the work of the Ba-Pedi, worth £ 6. He had earned it by the practice of his art.

I here give the picture of a true Ronga *gobela*, from Tembe, who once passed through Rikatla with two assistants ; he was on a tour to exorcise the possessed of the land. He had a terrifying appearance with all his military and magical attire, his big snake skins, and his gnu tail ; he hardly condescended to pronounce a word, maintaining all the time a most dignified demeanour. He was, before all else, an exorcist.

These few descriptions are sufficient to illustrate the composite character of the magicians. There is no end to their charms and their tricks, but they are certainly in earnest as regards the practice of their art, and are convinced that they are very useful and powerful personages.

III. *The Method of dealing with Wizards.*

754 All the power of the magicians is resorted to in order to check
756 the enchantments of the baloyi. Their drugs are used with two
791 objects, — protection and cure, the cure consisting mainly in the disclosure of the wizard.

1) Protective methods.

789 The village, as we have seen, (I. p. 311) is well protected with
754 *anti-baloyi drugs*. The fence itself, the main entrance and the threshold of the headman's hut, have been magically treated when first built. But the magician, when he thinks it necessary, "revives" the drugs by burning his powder in a little fire on the road which enters the village. This protects the main entrance, and he does the same at the threshold of the headman's hut. The smoke will keep the wizards away. Stones, daubed with the powder, are placed in all directions to close the openings.

"These medicines act wonderfully," says Mankhelu. "Should a *noyi* succeed in entering the hut, the power of the smoke will be such that he will at once be revealed. The *noyi* will suddenly be seen there without any clothing, apparently dreaming, seeing nothing, knowing nothing. If it is a woman, I shall call her husband and show him his wife... 'What are you doing here?' he will say to her. She will not utter a word. Then I shall say to him : 'Look here, my friend... I might be hard on you. But I have pity. Do not allow your wife to do anything of the kind again. Pay me one or two oxen, and I will keep silent.' He will consent. Then I beat the woman with my stick. She awakes, and, quite ashamed of being in another hut without any clothing, she will fly away home!" Such is the testimony of Mankhelu, and he is certain of having succeeded more than once!!

Mboza asserted to me that he had witnessed a similar case

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A Ronga "gobela."

Phot. A. Bonl.

result if hostile feelings already existed between two persons (1). 754

Jealousy alone is sufficient to give rise to the suspicion even without a word having been uttered (2).

The fact of a woman having lost many children is also a reason [761] for suspecting her of being a witch, as the death of a baby is constantly considered as having been caused by its own mother, who wished "to eat it." The fact of belonging to a family of baloyi is also an indication to the same effect, buloyi being hereditary, as we have seen.

But a mere suspicion is not sufficient to warrant action being 754 taken against the suspected noyi. An objective proof, a piece of 787 convincing evidence is required, and this the magicians are asked to 791● supply. The patient's relatives go *to the diviner* who will cast the bones and discover whether the disease is due to witchcraft or not. This consultation is secret, and is merely preliminary. There are, in the sets of bones employed in Thonga divination, some which,

(1) The evangelist Silas G. was one day speaking to Saul N., an elder of his Church, about Church contributions and said: "So and so does not pay his dues. It would be good to show him his duty." Saul answered: "I do not wonder; that man has a bad wife and you are sure to fail in your duty when you have a bad wife." — "No", said Silas. "Everyone ought to pay his contribution. You, for example, would certainly do your duty even if you had a bad wife!" — "Nevertheless I maintain that a wife who behaves badly takes away her husband's courage. Look at your own case, Silas. Your wife does harm to your work as an evangelist. Did she not say the other day when she saw my baby: 'How fat it is! It is like a pumpkin!'" On hearing these words Silas starts! They are an accusation of buloyi. To say that the baby was as fat as a pumpkin showed that the woman who used these words was ready to eat its body during the night; the evangelist's wife was a noyi! An enquiry was at once started to ascertain if she had really pronounced these words, and the whole little Church was upset. Finally the elder was blamed for having brought an accusation of buloyi, which is forbidden in the Native Congregations, and he resigned his office. The evangelist and his wife "became thin" owing to the mental suffering caused by the insinuation of the elder.

(2) I had amongst my evangelists a very active and intelligent man who cultivated large gardens and was well provided with everything. His neighbours began to suspect him for this reason. He said to them: "We ought not to work on Sundays," and this increased their suspicions. "It is evident", they said, "that *he is not alone!* How does he manage to have such splendid harvests when he does not work on Sundays? Surely he has others to till for him. He takes our backs and uses them to cultivate his big fields. And the reason why he has such wonderful crops is that he has taken our own mealies from our gardens by his witchcraft" — "But," said others, "you cannot complain! Mealies are plentiful in your gardens too!" — "No," answered the enemies of the evangelist. "Though you see mealies in our gardens, they are no longer mealies; they have been taken away by him." They meant that, just as a bewitched person is no longer normal but has been emptied of his viscera, so the cereals had been robbed of their virtue by buloyi.

754 787 791 represent the *baloyi*, in particular the astragalus of the reedbuck, or of the duiker, the small antelope which rambles about during the night, just at the time when witches are at work. Should this bone fall in a certain way near the bone representing the patient, or near his amulets, which have been placed on the mat, this shows that his disease is the result of buloyi. The name of the noyi will be sought, and perhaps ascertained, on that first day, but the parents of the victim will never venture to accuse him merely on the testimony of the bones. The next step will be to go to the *mungoma*, the magician who "smells out" the *baloyi*.

The magician employs various means to find out a noyi.

a) *The Enchanted Horn.*

754 791 In the Murchison Range there is a magician who possesses an enchanted horn, into which he introduces a short twig smeared with an anti-baloyi medicine. Persons suspected of having killed by witchcraft must try to pull the twig out of the horn. The noyi will be unable to do this, though he may declare, like the others : "I have not killed." Amongst the Nkunas, the magician who has succeeded in finding out a wizard, takes his coat and hangs it on a tree as a trophy.

b) *The Enchanted Flute.*

When some one dies and his relatives think he has been bewitched, they can call a certain mungoma who "treats the grave" with his drugs. If he thinks that he has discovered the noyi, he gives to the bereaved a small flute, telling him to go and play on it in the neighbourhood. This helps not only to detect the wizard but to punish him ; he will die. This rite is called "to play on the little flute (ku yimbelela shinangana) for somebody."

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

one, a woman who caused his disease, either by bewitching him, or because he had an unlawful connection with her. On the right three other shells : that at the top, the male one, is a friend going out of the village to fetch a remedy ; the two others, female, are two women opening their mouths, not to lament, but to laugh! They laugh at the man who was silly enough to expose himself to such a disgrace! 787

Those who practise the hakati art must also be initiated. They must bury their shells in the earth on the road, and when some one passes by on the path they unearth one shell, a male one if the passer-by be a man, a female one if it be a woman, (See later).

IV. *The Divinatory bones (Bula).*

The hakati shells are regarded as more or less childish. The divinatory bones, on the contrary, constitute an admirable system of divination and play a considerable part in the life of the tribe. They are called *nhlolo* (yin-tin), which is their little name ; the great one is *bula*, evidently the same word as *ku bula*, to speak, i. e. the *Word* with a capital letter, the Revelation! I remember old Maselesele, a Nkuna diviner, telling me : "You Christians believe in your Bible. Our Bible is much better than yours! It is the divinatory bones!" 787 791

I was initiated into the knowledge of this wonderful art by many masters. The first was *Spoon* (I. p. 4) ; he was only a beginner, and his set of bones was not complete ; but he understood the rules perfectly well and all that he told me was confirmed by subsequent study. The second was *Maselesele*, the old Nkuna just referred to, a blind man who knew his bones by the mere touch, and had a true veneration for them. Unhappily for this poor Nkuna, his hut was burnt during the Sikororo war (I. p. 512) and the precious basket containing his bones was destroyed. — "Why did they not warn you of the fate they were about to undergo?," I asked Maselesele one day. "They might have ordered you to save them if they knew everything!" He could find no answer to this remark, but his faith was absolutely unshakable. Such was also the case with *Mankhelu*, who had

787 practised the art all his life, and was attached to his divinatory
791 bones by every fibre of his being. His set was the most complete I ever saw, containing as many as 64 objects. He even had two sets, one contained in a leathern basket, the other in a kind of net with small meshes ; the first he called the Father and the second the Son. The Father always remained at home, whilst he took the Son with him on his travels (1). I spent many hours with him, trying fully to understand his teaching, and he took great trouble to initiate me, concealing nothing from me, wondering sometimes at his own readiness to do so, and saying: "This thing I would not have told my own son." I had thus an opportunity of penetrating into the depths of the Bantu mind, which has perhaps invented nothing more elaborate or more typical than this divinatory system. Of course no sensible person would for a moment believe in the objective value of these practices. *Astragalomancy* has no more real value than Cheiromancy, Necromancy and all the other "mancies." But I am obliged to admit that the Thonga system is far more ingenious than any other that I have met with, and that it answers admirably to the wants of the Natives, comprehending all the elements of their life, and photographing them, so to speak, in such a manner that indications and directions can be obtained for all possible cases.

I have explained Spoon's art in detail in "Les Ba-Ronga." I will here confine myself to Mankhelu's revelations, which were more complete, as the old man was one of the masters of the diviner's profession as well as of that of the medicine-man.

1) The objects composing the set of divinatory bones.

787 These may be divided into two kinds : the *bones* properly
825 speaking, most of which are *astragalus bones*, and the various objects which are *not bones*. I shall now enumerate them, always

(1) I heard of another bone-thrower from Tembe who had also two baskets of bones; the first was called the basket of the chiefs, the second the basket of the subjects; the first was used in criminal cases to discover wizards: they were bones which "killed," and when they had accomplished their purpose, the diviner left them to rest for a whole week, using in the meantime the second basket. He then washed them, and they were ready to be used again.

between the animal and these objects, and we know how quick the Bantu mind is at discovering such relations between men and animals. 787

2) The Consultation of the divinatory bones and the rules for their interpretation.

I owe to a Tembe informant the following full description of the sequence of acts performed in a consultation of the divinatory bones. Suppose one of the inmates of the village to have been suddenly taken ill. The people who dwell in the same hut will at once go to the headman, even if it is night-time ; he will come, inspect the patient, and, having convinced himself of the seriousness of the case, he will start immediately for the diviner's village, not forgetting to take with him the necklace of the patient with his protective amulets (timfisa p. 471) ; if the man did not wear timfisa, the headman will replace these by some roots of a common plant, the tjeke, p. 14, or even of a common grass, the ntlangi; these roots will be rubbed against his forehead and against his chest and will then be called his *ntjuleko*. Having reached the diviner's village, the consultant briefly states the object of his visit. A mat is unrolled and the ntjuleko placed on it, somewhere at the side ; the diviner takes all his bones in his hand, holds them firmly, and having chewed a little piece of a magic root, (1) spits on them and throws them on to the mat, saying with emphasis : "Mhamoo!" Those attending the consultation answer in the same tone : "Hizwaa! Si ya vuma!" — "Yes! We are agreed." This throwing is only preliminary. By spitting over his bones the diviner wishes to awaken them (pfusha) to make them see (hanyanyisa). He then passes them to the consultant, who will himself throw them throughout the whole consultation, the diviner only holding his little stick and pointing to them in order to explain their significance. 787 755 791

In the first place the consultant takes the necklace of the patient 787 755

(1) Mankhelu used for this purpose the bulb of a Liliacea called shirungulu, which has an agreeable scent.

787 position, the second the *passive* one. Most of the astragalus may fall not only on these two principal sides, but also on the right or on the left side. The right side is called *ntjumba*, and is somewhat convex. Mankhelu explained to me its meaning by himself imitating the position (See the accompanying plate). He sits with his shield protecting him, with *his chest full*, ready to

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Phot. H. A. Junod.

Mankhelu imitating the "ntjumba" position.

787 spit (like a cat), and his assagay lifted ready to be thrown ; this is the position of hostility, of anger. The left side is called *dzwari*, or *minkono*, viz., the elbows ; it is somewhat concave. It is the position of a man half leaning on his elbows, *his chest empty*, enjoying life and not threatening others, the assagay being turned towards the soil (See the next plate). These two positions, which I represent by ×, the sign of multiplication, for *ntjumba*, and :, the sign of division, for *minkono*, are rarely met with. Spoon knew nothing of them. They belong to a more elaborate art. In fact

787 the two first positions are by far the most common. Let us see what is the meaning of some of the divinatory objects in these different positions :

Baboon +, the village is firm ; no ruins! Baboon —, the village is destroyed ; disease or death ; that which you eat does not remain inside : dysentery.

Ancestor-god +, the gods are happy and thankful. Ancestor-

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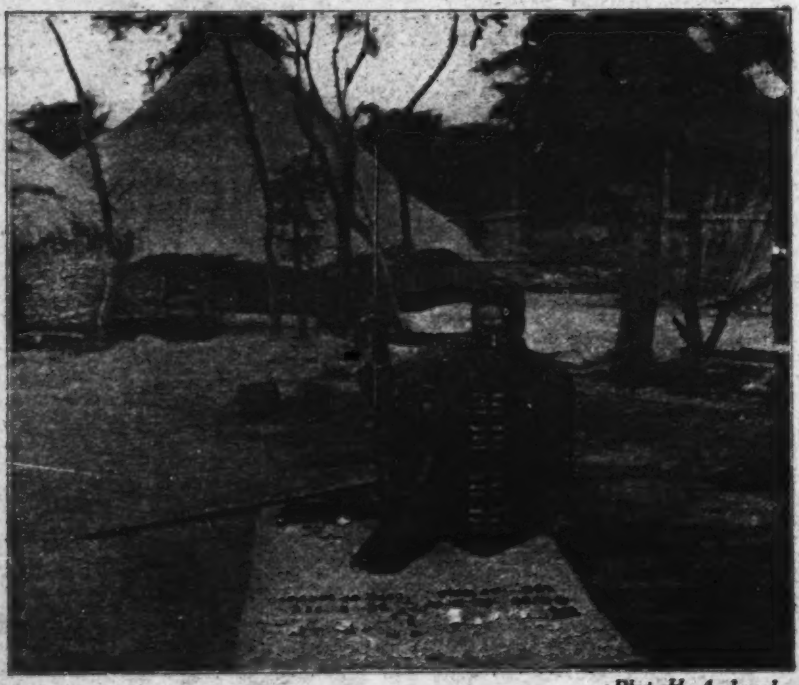

Phot. H. A. Junod.

Mankhelu imitating the "mimkoso" position.

787 god —, they sleep ; there is nothing to fear ; ×, they are angry, they speak in a low voice ; : , they speak mildly.

Kanye +, the drugs have their eyes open (the two kernels inside the nkanye stone have been removed, and it appears to have two eyes, which are visible in the positive position and hidden in the negative) ; the drugs help, cure. Kanye —, the eyes of the drugs are closed ; the medicine-man will not succeed.

Crocodile stone +, the country is at peace, the village is happy,

787 and two He-Goats +. He comes with dignity to meet the arrivals. Behind, in the village itself (at the top of the plate), boys (kids) play beneath the shade of the trees (kanye) ; two women are killing each other's lice! i. e. Reedbuck and Cypraea, the female sea-shell! etc. One of the Tortoises is —, showing its black side. But this is not a sign of disease or defilement ; the village has been cleaned, the black soil is visible everywhere because it has been well swept and the huts also have been smeared afresh. The black colour also indicates that the bush has been burnt ; it prophesies the time when these strangers will come, when the bush-fire has reduced all the grass to ashes, in September or October, at the end of the winter The Tortoise in front of He-Goat is + ; this is the face of Mankhelu, radiant with joy. "Mahlwen ka mbulwa ku nyuka!" — "on the face of the old man there is sweet perspiration." His drugs are all right (kanye +, means both drugs and shade). Crocodile is —, the rivers are low ; this confirms the forecast of the time of the arrival. The Kimberley stone is + ; the earth is solid, firm. Oliva +, the sky is clear, we are happy! When we rise in the morning we look towards the East! etc.

—"Wonderful!" said I to Mankhelu. "Only they did not come!" — "Never mind," he answered. — "Then the bones have deceived you!" — "Not at all! If it is not this year, it will be next year! Moreover, we diviners are not afraid of being told that our bones lie. When, later on, our prophecies are fulfilled, then people wonder! They are convinced. And after all, if the Word lies, it is not my fault!" — "How is that?" — "We do not put our ideas into them (a hi ti rumeteli) ; we merely interpret them ; it is they who speak!" — "Then they have a power in themselves?" — "No! the power is in the chest of the diviner." Such was the conversation with which the demonstration closed. I shall return to it presently.

4) The initiation of the diviners.

● 791 Astragalomancy is not an esoteric art ; every one in the tribe knows the bones, and their significance, and all the men attend the consultations and help in the interpretation. However, every one is not a diviner and an initiation is necessary to become a fully qualified practitioner. If a young man feels that he has the qualities of perspicuity and shrewdness necessary for the practice of the art, he begins by collecting the astragalus one after

another. This is a long job. Spoon told me that, having once been annoyed by a forecast made by a diviner, he thought: "I might as well consult the bones myself!" So he picked up the astragalus of a goat in a hut. He obtained others when hunting; on the road to Johannesburg he saw a curious stone, which became the lucky stone in his set. When he had ten astragalus, he began to throw them for his comrades, giving them advice in their love affairs! Then he consulted his bones before going to hunt and noticed that, when the astragalus of the duiker fell in the negative position, he killed game. But he was still an apprentice; he had not the right to receive money, but only bracelets which hung on the string of his basket (1). When the apprentice has earned enough of these bracelets, he goes to an old practitioner, gives them to him as a fee, and asks to be initiated, so that he may become a master himself. Shishakane, in the Movumbi district, and Ñwahoñwana, in the Mabota clan, were those to whom such applications were made. The following are the ceremonies of initiation amongst the Ba-Ronga. 791

The master takes all the bones collected by the apprentice, kills a fowl, introduces them into the body (2), and cooks the whole. Then the candidate eats the fowl, returns home with his bones and buries the astragalus on the road, at the entrance of the village. He hides himself at that spot, to watch. When a woman passes, he exhumes a female astragalus; when a man, a male one; the he-goat, in the case of a man of ripe age, the kid, in that of a boy, etc. In this way all his bones are said to "have returned to him." Then he again calls on the master. The old man orders him to close his eyes and places before him all his bones in a line; the candidate must recognise them all by touch and take them all up one after the other, pronouncing the name of each. The examination evidently aims at ascertaining if he knows them thoroughly. Having successfully passed through the trial, the

(1) The divinatory basket of Spoon is shown on the plate p. 124 No. 2.

(2) I suppose that he adds his own bones to those of the applicant, in order that their divinatory virtue may enter the bones of the candidate. This is the rule followed in the Nkuna initiation. See later.

791 new diviner must undergo a hondlola, a long ablution with nkuhlu leaves, after which he is initiated ; he has the right of asking payment in cash, up to the sum of three pence. For a shilling, he will consent to throw the bones all day until they have revealed everything.

Amongst the Nkunas the initiation is somewhat different ; the apprentice does not practise his art until he has earned a goat. He practises in foreign villages, where he is not known and where people believe that he has already been initiated. Having succeeded, he brings the animal to his master and will then "have his bones cooked for him" (a ta psekeriwa bula). One of the forelegs and the diaphragm are put in a pot together with a root called banga. The set of bones of the master and that of the apprentice are added to them, and the whole is cooked. When the meat is done, the contents of the pot are poured into a lihlelo basket, and both suck in the broth with their lips. They then eat the meat, which has been cut into pieces, without touching it with their hands, seizing it with their teeth alone, "the same as vultures do, which scent meat from far away." The heart of one of these birds has been cooked with the other drugs "so that the new diviner will be able to dream of things which are far away and go straight to them." He will be able to go and guess anything at once without fear or hesitation.

The bones have remained in the lihlelo basket, and another drug is used to wash them ; this is the bark of a tree called *mbandjwa*. The new diviner must then show his powers of divination : all his astragalus being mixed with those of the master, he must pick them out without a mistake, calling them by the name he has given them. If he fails, the trial must be gone through again later ; he returns home and the bones are given a rest ; he then comes another day and the two sets are again dipped, this time into beer ; the beer is drunk by both the master and the apprentice, the bones are washed and thrown, and the latter must now pick them out again. He will probably succeed, and so becomes a master. But the old diviner gives him one of the bones of his own set, which will "reign over the set of the initiated." This bone will always be considered first ; it is the *father* and *mother* of the set.

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If the other bones indicate a bad omen, the new diviner will not be troubled so long as the king of the set shows a good one. If, on the other hand, the king is in the — position, or in the × position, the young man will fear to give a favourable prophecy. 791

The diviner (wa bula) is in most cases at the same time a ñanga, a medicine-man, and he will probably initiate the candidate into the knowledge of his drugs also. "Because," said Mankhelu, "to possess the Word alone is of little use : you need also the *mbhulo*, the magic medicines." The price paid to the initiator was formerly 80 hoes, or a wife, and the initiated, when calling at the village of his master, used to sleep in the hut of this woman. Being in possession of these new qualifications the newly-qualified diviner has the right of *planting his magic forked branch* (shiphandje. See Illustration I. p. 5 and II. p. 495). This rite is subject to many rules, which the initiator teaches his pupil ; the latter must dig a certain quantity of white sand in a deep pool, and bury it in his hut where he intends placing the branch. This will then be "planted in the abyss" (shidziba). Should the hut burn, or should enemies set fire to it, water will spring from the depths and prevent the shipandje from being consumed. Moreover a sacrifice is made to the ancestors who transmitted their drugs to the initiator, and the psanyi of the slaughtered sheep is used to smear the branch. An intimate relation remains between the old doctor and his pupil. When the former dies, the latter must "raise," or "awaken his drugs" by a number of ceremonies which aim at removing the defilement brought upon them by this death. These are rules which apply to medicine-men as well as to diviners.

The forked pole is both the laboratory and the altar (it is also called gandjelo, p. 388) and also the museum of the magician. He hangs to it his calabashes of drugs, his basket of bones, the psirungulo (part of the victims preserved as religious amulets, p. 472) and any valuable objects that he may possess. When Mankhelu had made some money by his bone-throwing or his medical practice, he used to leave the coins during the night at the foot of the branch, in order to inform his gods of his success!

I am unable to say whether, in former times, the diviners *formed a class* apart within the tribe, better defined, more close and secret

791 than is at present the case. It may be so, as the hondlola by which they pass from apprenticeship to mastership is a true rite of integration, by which they enter upon a new condition and acquire a special position. At every new moon henceforth they will have to wash their bones ritually in order to remove the defilement of the preceding month, after which they will smear them with psanyi.

When a diviner finds that he is not successful in his forecasts, he consults another member of the fraternity, who tells him to offer such and such a victim to an ancestor-god who was himself a bone-thrower, and who is supposed to have given the bones to his unsuccessful descendant. The spirit of interpretation of the deceased will then enter into the supplicant.

In order to attract customers, Mankhelu kept a little pellet of black grease amongst his bones. When he arrived at a place to practise his art, he took a little of this grease and placed it on a glowing cinder, arranging the bones all round, and the smoke which rose from the fat acted as a summons to the people. "So I saw one coming from this direction with an ox, another from another direction with a goat, and made good profit!"

Women may also become bone-throwers, but this is a rare occurrence.

5) The importance of the divinatory bones.

787 791 From all the foregoing information it may easily be gathered that the art of bone-throwing is by no means child's play, nor mere quackery by which astute sooth-sayers deceive their credulous fellows. It is a true art which the diviners practise *in all sincerity*, themselves believing that they receive objective revelations through its means. This sincerity is attested by many proofs.

1) The fact, already mentioned, that it is not a secret, esoteric art, but that all know its rules and take part in the interpretation.

2) The confidence which diviners have in the power of their bones, and the strong attachment which they profess for their divinatory basket (1). Each of their astragalus bears a name which reminds them

(1) The conversation, just referred to, which I had with Mankhelu after his explanation of the unfulfilled prophecy, is very striking in this respect. It concluded as follows: — "Mankhelu," I said to him, "you see that your bones deceive you! They

787 of the person who gave it to them, the circumstances in which it was
791 found, and some of the triumphs of their career. Their whole life is connected with these bones, which they truly love and to which they are bound by all the fibres of their hearts!

Of course diviners are *shrewd*! Their interpretation does not proceed from mathematic evidence, but from their extraordinary powers of imagination. Tortoise in the negative position may at the same time mean black earth, death, defilement, a well-swept village, the burnt bush, according to the requirements of the case ; but this is fair play and everyone approves of their ingenuity ; it is not a conscious attempt to deceive. It is evident that the predictions often remain unfulfilled, as in the case of Mankhelu's prophecy. Or the exact reverse of the forecast happens. One of my evangelists, Filipi Mabemane, when still a heathen, went to consult a Matjolo diviner regarding the birth of a child which was shortly to take place. "It will be a boy, and he will live" was the answer. Actually, it was a girl and she died! So many people are more or less sceptical and say : "Tinhlolo i ntlhangana na pso!" — "The bones tell the truth when by chance it so happens!" However their faith is not impaired for long! The anxiety to know the future is so great that they consult anew, but not the same diviner. People say : "Psa mu hlula," — "He has been overcome," and go to another! Qualified doctors sometimes experience similar treatment even amongst the Whites! Viguet once quarelled with a bone-thrower. The man of art contended that he always told the truth. "What did you tell me?" said Viguet. "You told me that I should get plenty of oxen and goats. Where are they? And why did you not tell me : 'Hanya, hanya, hanya... Live, live, live... there will come a day when something will happen and we shall quarrel!' " But the sceptics are rare. Faith in the bones is blind, but it is great!

How is this confidence, which both diviners and their customers have in the divinatory bones, to be explained?

are old, dry, dead things which cannot help you ! Come to the light of the true Revelation of Jesus Christ." — "You are right, Moneri," answered my friend. "I am old! I cannot use my bones any more, as I no longer travel for trade or feasting ! I shall have to come to the Church by and by." — "If that is so, let me have your basket ; it interests me very much. I will pay for it." — "He ! Moneri ! Impossible !" — "Why ? At any rate sell me the Son, if you wish to keep the Father !" — "No ! I want to keep the Son." — "Then give me the Father !" — "Never !" said he quite scandalised. — "You see that your heart is still in it, old chap !" — "Yes. When a child has dysentery, can I leave it so ? Must I not consult the bones to know what drug to give ?..." I did not succeed that day in buying either Son or Father. However, the diviner died some years later and his heirs consented to sell me one of his sets, which is now in my possession.

787 Does it come from a *religious belief*? It is not easy to say definitely to
791 what extent the divinatory art rests on religion. On the one hand, the power of interpretation of the bones comes from the ancestor-gods who were bone-throwers themselves, and they are invoked to give or to revive this power. Mankhelu even told me that the prophecy of the arrival of the strangers had been inspired in him by his deceased father Shiluvane. But the Bula, the Word, is not generally looked on as being the utterance of the ancestor-gods. The bones are, in a certain sense, *superior to the gods* whose intentions they disclose. The Bula is the revelation of a more or less impersonal power, independent of the gods.

787 It is undeniable that the divinatory art is *essentially magical* ; it rests
789 on those universal axioms of primitive mentality which are deeply
791 engrained in the Bantu mind (p. 368) and this is sufficient to account for the indisputable value which it possesses in the eyes of the Thongas. Like replaces like. By virtue of mere external similarity one object can signify another. Thus human beings are represented by animals which resemble them in a certain point. The reedbuck which wanders during the night stands for the wizards who do the same ; the hyena, which eats the remains of the lion's feast, is the parasite who follows the chief, etc. Thus there are representative and represented objects. But like also acts on like : in some mysterious way the fate of the representative object will be the fate of the object represented. There is no doubt that diviners sometimes claim not only the power to form a diagnosis, to discover causes and give advice, but to influence the course of events themselves and determinate certain results. Mankhelu believed that he had contributed to the defeat of the Sikororo tribe when the bones so vividly depicted the rout of their army. If imitative magic controls the divinatory art, the part played by communionist magic is equally great. The part represents the whole. The astragalus, which is but a small bone, represents the whole body, and its fate prophecies the fate of the entire animal or person represented by it. The Native mind has a much profounder conception of the unity of the animal and human worlds than we have. Spoon once said to me mysteriously : "The astragalus of the goat truly represents the people of the village, because these animals live in the village ; they know us, they know what is in us." Observe also how the consultant takes the amulets of the patient and rubs them against the bones in order that they may be able to speak the truth about him. These amulets contain the nails and hair of the patient if they have been tied round his neck in the hondlola ceremony. Moreover they are covered with his "nsila," the exudation of his body.

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the material representation of his personality. By this contact the patient has in a way become a part of the "complexus Bula" and what happens to the bones will also happen to him ; what is said by the bones will henceforth apply directly to him. This magic conception of Nature is probably the profound and secret reason why the diviners believe so firmly in their art.

On the other hand, this art is so perfect that bone-throwers can derive very great satisfaction from the practice of it. It must be born in mind that, in fact, all the elements of Native life are represented by the objects contained in the basket of divinatory bones. It is a resumé of their whole social order, of all their institutions, and the bones, when they fall, provide them with an instantaneous picture of all that may befall them. This system is so elaborate that I do not hesitate to say that, together with their language, their folklore, their lobola customs and their burial rites, it is the product of their psychic life which shows most intelligence. If the premises of divination are accepted, astragalomancy seems to me vastly superior to cheiromancy and all the other systems which have been invented by us. It is also superior to the divination by four tablets of ivory or wood practised by a certain number of South African tribes, a description of which will be found in Appendix VI (1).

But if this system of divination is a proof of great intelligence, it must be confessed that *its results*, as shown in the psychic life of the tribe,

(1) There are some grounds for thinking that divination by astragalus bones is very old in the history of mankind. The Greeks practised *astragalomancy*. In a paper to which I shall refer in App. VI, the Rev. N. Roberts mentions the temple of Dodone, in which, according to Cicero, there was a large brass basin with the statue of a man upon it, and this man held in his hands a whip with three straps from which hung small astragalus bones. When these bones were set in motion by the wind, they struck against the basin and the sounds thus produced had a prophetic character. This was astragalomancy, but of a very different kind from that just described. Aristotle makes frequent allusions to the astragalus bone and says, inter alia, that one of its sides, named *coon*, represents the figure 6 ; another, named *chion*, the figure 1, etc. This shows that in his time the astragalus bone was already identified with the dice. The dice, also called *αστραγαλος* in Greek is simply an astragalus bone whose sides have been cut so as to form a perfect cube. We find traces of the use of the astragalus even further back in the past. Angelo Mosso, quoted by the same author, asserts that he found many astragalus in Italy, where they were used in connection with primitive religion as far back as the neolithic period. The discovery in the lake of Neuchâtel of a collection of more than thirty astragalus in the lake dwellers' station of Auvernier may be a proof that these bones did in truth play a part in the customs of primitive humanity. If this is so, then the Bantus have preserved the astragalus as they did the wooden pillow of the old Egyptians, the ancestrolatry of the Mousterians and the "mbaya" (p. 93) of the Libyans. The astragalus is still employed in play to represent cattle by Swiss children in the Canton of Valais, and I am told that the South African Boers have the same custom, and call these bones dol-osse.

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which he acts in a strange manner, hears voices calling him and often runs amok, the Sotho bone-thrower learns his art in the same quiet manner as any other craft and completes his training not by any public ceremonial but by a private strengthening consisting of drinking water in which the bones have been cooked together with the blood of a cock to make him wakeful and clever. There is no objection to people practising their profession long before they have completed their training, so that doctors range from the novice to the renowned diviner of long standing. The profession, though open to all, is usually inherited from a relative; but there is an increasing number of men to-day who become doctors for the money they make out of it and without undergoing any extensive training.

The doctor associated with the new cult of possession that has within the past thirty years spread over the Lowveld from the east resembles in his methods the Zulu–Xhosa doctor. He is possessed by spirits who talk through him and order him to throw bones and guide him in the use of medicines, and he uses all manner of wonderful tricks. But he undergoes no initiation other than that of all possessed people. The cult is confined largely to women who, during possession, speak in a foreign tongue, said to be Thobolo or Kgalaka, but in reality a kind of gibberish. Possession takes the form of dancing to the accompaniment of tambourines, rattles and a special kind of drum beat, initiation into which is believed to cure the ailment which accompanied the first manifestations of the possessing spirit. These spirits are always those of relatives, usually on the mother's side, in contrast to the foreign spirits who are thought to possess Shangana–Tonga who have the same cult. Only a few of those who are possessed ever become doctors and then only when the possessing spirit was a doctor. They are the only class of Sotho doctor who receives inspiration direct from the spirits.

A class of doctor that does not belong to the Sotho culture yet is indispensable to Lowveld Sotho society, who is seldom or never a Sotho yet has a place in Sotho life, is the *mokome* or Shangana–Tonga smeller-out. He divines chiefly by the head without much use of bones, is able to find things that have been hidden, and is the final judge or smeller-out of witches.

The doctor is not, in the minds of most people, clearly distinguished